

2021 Eckhart Tolle Talk Forgiveness is Freeing

[Speaker 4] (0:19 - 0:32)

Eckhart's teachings and sounds true, present forgiveness is freeing, teachings to let go of judgments and conflict with Eckhart Tolle. And now session one.

[Speaker 1] (0:55 - 36:26)

And this question comes up periodically, it must be important for many people. Can you please give me pointers on how to forgive myself for the hurts I've done to others and also to myself? Yes, as I said, the question comes up quite often.

It's because it is often asked by people who have grown in consciousness, who have become more conscious over the years. And suddenly, they look back on their life and realize how unconscious they were in the past. And they realize the things that they did in the past, for example, how they brought up their children, or how they behaved in a past relationship, or how they dealt with a situation in the past, very reactive way, perhaps, and they look back on it, and then suddenly see, how could I have been so unconscious?

How could I have acted in that way? How could I have done that? And this is why the question is often asked in our meetings here, because all the people who come here have grown in consciousness.

This question is not asked by people who don't grow in consciousness. They continue to behave in the same way. And they think they're absolutely right.

And everybody else is wrong. So unconscious people don't ask that question. It's only people who have grown in consciousness who ask that question, because you see the discrepancy now between who, what you were before and what you are now, how you would behave now in the same situation.

Now, it's important not to identify with unconscious behavior that happened in the past. Because now, what does it mean when I say identify? It means to derive your sense of self from something that you did in the past that you now see was wrong, or unconscious.

And then you say, I did that. So if you identify with unconscious behavior in the past, you identify with unconsciousness and make it into your identity, which means your sense of self. And you feel bad about yourself.

That happened very easily. So you have to see that what happened in the past was unconsciousness acting through you, which you inherited. When you came into this world, you could not act beyond your level of consciousness, nobody can.

So to make that into an identity and say, I am responsible for that would be an illusion. You are not responsible for that. It happened.

If you had your present level of consciousness, you would act differently. You really become responsible only when you reach a certain level of consciousness. It does not mean that if you perpetrate or somebody perpetrates dreadful crimes, that they should not be held responsible because there are karmic consequences for unconsciousness.

And that's part of how the universe evolves. The human consciousness evolves partly through humans experiencing the karmic consequences of their actions, which means they suffer. And that's perfectly how it should be.

So I'm not saying, when we say a person is not responsible for what they do, this is ultimately true. I want to say of a certain level of consciousness, they're not responsible. They're at the mercy of their conditioning, which in many cases is dreadful.

Grown into a violent family, abused as children, dreadful conditioning. Does it mean when they perpetrate crimes, kill people, they are not responsible? Yes, it's true they're not responsible, but there are karmic consequences nevertheless.

And sometimes the karmic consequences come in the form of the justice system. Sometimes the justice system is karma, and they put you away. So you experience the consequences of your unconsciousness.

But then you might say, well, that's unfair, isn't it? If they are not responsible, then why do they need to? Well, the law of karma is that humans will experience the consequences of their unconsciousness because humans are meant to move beyond that.

And if you're not moving beyond that, you suffer. But that's ultimately part of the awakening because many humans awaken because they have tasted the consequences of their unconsciousness. And sometimes it happens in prison.

Sometimes it happens because they inflicted so much suffering on themselves ultimately that they awoke. They are not responsible, and yet the consequences are there. But because they're not responsible, also this we need to remember that we should not make their, if it's somebody else, we should not make their crimes or their unconsciousness into their identity.

Again, separate what they do from who they essentially are. They just represent the evolution of consciousness through suffering. Entire nations do it to each other.

So coming back to you yourself, don't make unconscious behavior from your past into your sense of self. You fall back into unconsciousness by doing that. You have moved on.

If there's any action you take to remedy something that you did in the past, then by all means do it. If you need to talk to somebody whom you treated unfairly or badly, and if you feel that is the right thing to do, then do that. But realize that who you essentially are has nothing to do with that.

Who you essentially are was covered up at that time. The consciousness that you are was covered up by karmic layers. So that is, that frees you from guilt.

Guilt is not helpful, and guilt ultimately is also ego. Ego doesn't only love to make other people feel guilty and make other people wrong. The ego can also do it to itself, and you can have a huge ego by having an enormous amount of guilt in your psyche, in your energy field.

And again, the wonderful saying, Jesus said it all, as reported on the cross, forgive them for they know not what they do. Forgive them means don't think that this is who they are, that this is their identity. Forgive really means don't realize that's not who they are.

It does not mean that they should be spared the consequences of their action. That doesn't, not even possible. How do I truly forgive myself for not being present with another?

I assume the question refers to something that happened in the past, not in the present, because if the other is here with you now, then there's nothing to forgive. You just be present. So it must be something that you were not present with someone in the past, because there was not enough presence in you.

You cannot manifest any behavior beyond your level of consciousness. Either you had no idea what presence was, you were not yet able to access that dimension of consciousness, or it was there very weak in you, not strong enough perhaps to survive in that particular interaction or relationship. Some parents have that feeling also because when they look back upon how they brought up their children, they cannot believe how unconscious they were as parents.

Now, there's no such thing as totally conscious parents. No matter what you do, there's always something that you don't do right. Absolute perfection is just not possible, but there are now for the first time perhaps in history, there are parents who are relatively conscious, who are endeavoring to be conscious as parents.

In my generation, it was unheard of. Conscious parents, what is that? You just, the parents brought you up in the same way that they were brought up, in the same way that was sanctioned by the surrounding culture.

That's how you were brought up. Conscious parents, what's that nonsense? And of course, in my generation, I didn't know anybody who had even remotely conscious parents.

My parents, of course, they did the best they could. They loved me to the best of their ability, but they were both very unconscious. Later, when my dad was very old, some of the egoic self broke off, little bits of pieces of his ego disintegrated.

There was still an ego left, but the massive ego that he had before started to dissolve. If he had lived beyond his age, he reached the age of 90. Perhaps if he had lived to 100 or 110, he might've gone much further still.

But my parents were deeply unconscious. There was constant conflict at home, terrible drama and scenes and shouting and screaming and physical violence. It was a nightmare.

And that was not uncommon. Of course, even nowadays, there are children, still many who have to endure that, still many, but there are conscious parents. And I have met children who are born into a conscious family.

And that's a wonderful thing. It's a new thing. So forgiving yourself for not being present, there's always a tendency of the ego to identify with certain conditions.

So the ego identifies with the condition of unconsciousness and says, that was me. And I was wrong. I should have been conscious at the time.

But you were not, you couldn't have been more conscious at the time than you were at the time. So there comes a, you forgive yourself by realizing that nobody can act beyond their level of consciousness. And whatever you did in the past was an expression of, on your personal level, of the evolutionary state of yourself.

And on a collective level, you manifest the evolutionary state of humanity until you begin to awaken. And then you become a forerunner at the forefront, spearheading the growth of consciousness. There were many silly things I did in relationships when I was in my 20s, unconscious, nothing drastic, fortunately, but it could have been, but hurting people, but not being aware of it, ego, egoic motivations, and so on.

I wasn't even there. I was, there was conditioning operating through me, the ways in which my mind had been conditioned. I wasn't awake yet.

So it was a kind of dreamlike state. It shouldn't be that difficult to forgive yourself for something that you did in a dream. And it's the unconscious state is very much like that.

If you have still an opportunity to be with, to go to this person and perhaps explain that you were unconscious, if that is, we don't know what level of consciousness this person's at, whether this person would be able to listen to you and even understand what you're saying. So, or this person may not be alive anymore, or there may not be an opportunity to speak, but either way, you forgive yourself by realizing that there is ultimately nothing to forgive. And that even applies to another person because if forgiving goes both ways,

sometimes you have to forgive yourself, but you also have to forgive somebody else.

If you do not want to carry the enormous burden of carrying a grievance, which is a dreadful thing, just one grievance towards another human being, that is a heavy grievance that you carry, can stop the rising of presence in you. So letting go of grievances is vital. And again, it's whatever somebody else did to you, they acted out of their level of unconsciousness.

Rather than make it into an identity, somebody does something that's unconscious to you, and then you transform it mentally into that person's identity that makes it almost impossible to forgive. In ordinary human interaction, it is very important to overlook things that humans do, because every human being that you come into contact with will manifest, even if they are awakening, they are in the awakening process, they will still manifest occasionally areas of unconsciousness when they interact with you. They might lie to you for some reason here and there, they might do this or that.

And then if you focus on that excessively, you say, he lied to me. Okay, have you ever lied to anybody? No, I never lie.

Okay, then you need to. He lied to me. And then you focus on that, and you amplify that, and you make that into part of his or her identity.

And then you, it's very easy to do that, and this is judgment, and you focus on that little thing, and you amplify it, and it becomes part of who you think that person is. So if you want to have a relatively harmonious relationship, many things you need to overlook in the other person, because every person has his or her unconsciousness that occasionally manifests, hopefully not massive unconsciousness, because you might not want to be with him or her, to have a close interaction. But some unconsciousness, yes, some insensitivity may arise in there.

They may say or do something that is selfish, or that they may have a very one-sided perspective of something. They may misperceive you, they may misperceive your motivation, you misperceive their motivation, all kinds of things. So to forgive in the presence situation means to overlook.

So it's not the big forgiving, but an overlooking of things, so that you can focus on the being of the other person, rather than focus on the faults, which are unconsciousness. So the same applies to human beings. If you see a fault, don't dwell on it, as applies to you if you're looking for a home in California.

If you see a fault, don't dwell on it. My question, forgiveness. Is forgiveness just a requirement of our ego?

As we awaken, do we lose the need to forgive? Now, to forgive someone, of course, implies that there's something to forgive. If there's nothing to forgive, you won't even

think or talk about forgiveness, because there's nothing to forgive.

So to forgive implies that there was something there that was non-forgiving, and that is dropped. And so there was some kind of grudge, grievance, whatever it is, some issue with somebody blaming, holding, longstanding grievance, whatever. It was there.

It's then recognized. You recognize that it is not healthy. If that's the only reason, good enough reason to drop it.

It's not healthy. It doesn't promote aliveness and well-being in yourself. Good enough reason to let go of that.

It does nothing to right the balance. If there's a karmic imbalance, somebody took something away from you, or somebody did something to you, the grievance does nothing to redress the balance. You can allow the universe to redress the balance automatically, but you don't want to be stuck in that dysfunctional mind pattern.

So you let go, and that means you forgive. You say, I have forgiven that person. I'm no longer holding an emotional energy around, mental emotional energy field around that, and derive a strange sense of satisfaction from that, which is what it is.

It's not true satisfaction. It's an ego satisfaction. It strengthens the ego.

To have a grievance strengthens the ego enormously. Some countries, whole religions, or groups within religions, or tribes and nations have collective grievances for centuries, which make up an important part of their collective sense of identity, egoic identity. So yes, you're right when there's an acceptance of other people and what they do, which can only be there, of course, if you're really awake and present, because then you realize that whatever unconscious behavior other human beings manifest towards you, or towards others, is not ultimately who they are.

It's not their true identity. It's part of where humanity is in the evolution of consciousness. So they are manifesting consciousness in the state of torpor or sleep, and they don't know what they're doing.

It looks as if they did. They're in the grip of certain energies and lack of presence. They're forced to act it out.

They're in the grip of very strong mind patterns and totally identified with their minds, which prevents them, many of them, people who inflict suffering on others, it prevents being stuck so deeply in their mind patterns, which is all abstract, prevents them from having any empathy with other humans, because they look through other humans through the density of their mental judgments and labels of who they are. They don't see you.

They see their label of you. It may be a personal label. It may be a collective label that they adopt, and that's what they see.

It's a mental abstraction, an inability to feel that you are an alive human being. They can't even feel that they are an alive human being. They are a mental construct to themselves.

They're so identified with whatever it is. It may be an ideology, a belief system, or a set of grievances or judgments. It's trapped in conceptual mental thinking, which prevents you from sensing the aliveness of others and yourself.

And then, of course, you do violent things to others, because really they're all dead, as far as you're concerned. You've labeled people. You've killed them already by imposing a label on them.

That's the first step in killing them. And then the next step becomes much easier. You don't feel anything anymore.

And once you realize that, then you see that they're suffering from mental illness. And so you would not want to equate somebody's mental illness with who that human being is. It's not who they are.

The fact that they are mentally ill, by the way, does not mean that they will not suffer the consequences of their unconsciousness. They will. That's how they generate their own suffering.

They generate suffering for themselves and others. But when you recognize that, then that which would need forgiveness doesn't even arise, because all you forgive is the illusion that somebody's unconscious behavior was who they are, and then the reaction that comes with that. Yes, if you're so really awake, then forgiveness is no longer necessary, because there's an acceptance and a recognition immediately of what it is in the other human that is perpetrating whatever they do, and it's not who they essentially are.

It is a manifestation of unconsciousness. Then there's nothing to forgive. You may still have to protect yourself to some extent or cross the road when you see a very unconscious being on one side of the road.

It's much better to cross over to the other side. But if contact is unavoidable, then all you can do is be there as presence, and sometimes it's possible, even in deeply unconscious humans, that you, by not reacting to their unconsciousness, that some consciousness is pulled out from underneath the unconscious patterns in that other human being, and suddenly you see, oh, there's still a human being there somewhere. It may respond when you're present.

There's no guarantee, but it may, and that's beautiful. So you treat the other not according to the behavior that they manifest towards you. You treat the other as if he or she were already conscious, that you honor their presence.

And sometimes then the dysfunctional patterns thrive and live on reaction of others. The dysfunctional pattern wants a reaction and fight. Now, if there is no reaction, and you look through it, so to speak, then it sometimes happens that the dysfunctional pattern subsides, maybe not for good, but in that moment it subsides and something else shines through.

And so when you're dealing with another human, always assume, so to speak, that there's something deeper there than the behavior that he or she manifests. So it may just be a simple situation, an unfriendly person. You're asking somebody in a restaurant or wherever, you're asking for information.

It's just an unfriendly person who regards you as a disturbance. And so you're not a human being, you're a disturbance, even though their job may be to give information. I have seen some people who are behind information counters who treated everybody who came with a question as a disturbance that shouldn't be there.

And again, that's a mind pattern, so there's no human being there, there's just an obnoxious disturbance. And if you cannot react to that and treat them like a disturbance, which would be quite normal, which just strengthens their mind pattern because it confirms that you really are a disturbance, if you treat them as if they were conscious and awake humans with respect and friendliness and kindness, then something surprising may happen. You don't need that to happen.

It's enough of a reward for you to treat the other with kindness, assuming that there is a deeper part that is more genuine and kind also. And sometimes it comes out then, and sometimes it doesn't, it's fine. But that's a beautiful practice, not to be drawn to the same level of interaction as what you are getting from the other, because that means if an unfriendly or unkind person provokes a new unfriendliness and unkindness, that means you are being drawn to the level of that person.

That means that person determines your state of consciousness. That means also you're not present enough. And that's the beauty of meeting difficult people in this world, which of course happens all the time.

And you can look at it as obnoxious, I don't want to deal with people anymore, I'm just happier with my dog. It is true that dogs are much easier to live with than many humans, but for us it's here to practice with humans, and the challenge is that that's how you get stronger through the practice. So every unfriendly and unkind human is an opportunity for you to practice non-reaction and inner freedom.

So it's wonderful. And if you're not successful in your practice and five hours later you're still harboring negative thoughts about that awful person, then it's time to forgive. How do I deal with negative family members while maintaining inner peace?

That's related, of course, to the earlier questions about parents trying to teach them about consciousness. Allow them their state of consciousness. Accept their limitations and realize that whatever they're saying to you is simply, they're manifesting their conditioning, that's all.

So you don't need to take it personally anymore. There's really not anybody there. There's just a bundle of ideas and concepts, the egoic self, and that wants something from you or tells you something.

It doesn't mean very much. So they're conditioned by their mind, which is conditioned by their past. Really, compassion is the answer to this, so that you don't condemn them for not having gone beyond their conditioning, for not being free of ego, for being stuck in the same consciousness for the past 30 or 40 years.

You don't condemn them for that. You just see it. And you may even be able to empathically, that's the word, sense something in them occasionally, perhaps only, that is deeper and more real than their conditioning, what they manifest on the surface.

So you may even be able to love them despite the fact that the person that they are on the surface may not be lovable at all, not equating the conditioning, the ego with who that human being is in their essence. Of course, there may still be some conditioning in you from your childhood, and they have a shared past with all those people, and it is more challenging to be present with humans with whom you have a lot of shared past than humans that you have not actually known for that long. The more past you share with a human, the more intense presence is required.

And of course, the most intense presence is required with your parents, because with whom share your entire past. That's why, as Ram Dass says, spending time with your parents is always the ultimate test, unless you're one of those few whose parents are relatively conscious. That's becoming, happens more often these days than in past generations.

In the generation of my parents, conscious parents were unheard of. I never met any conscious parents and anybody I knew, but in my generation, I never had children, but in my generation, there are a few more, because there were people who already participated in the spiritual awakening that happened in the 60s and early 70s. There was the human potential movement, all kinds of things coming in, and some people were beginning to wake up, and so some had children, and they were relatively, if not completely awakened, but perhaps relatively more conscious than other previous generations.

So you're then able to be non-reactive when you meet them, and that's a huge shift in your consciousness, to become non-reactive with people with whom you share a lot of past. And then you just, you look around them, and you're the witness, you're the witnessing consciousness of whatever behavior they manifest, and you look in amazement, you don't judge, just, same old thing, of course. Whatever they do or say, it's the same old thing, that's for sure.

Whatever form the same old thing takes, it's the same old thing. They are trapped in it. They don't know that.

That's why it's easy to forgive them, because they don't know.

[Speaker 3] (36:36 - 37:16)

I feel that I need to apologize to, and to ask forgiveness from my teenage daughter who has died. And since she is no longer here, how do I work through that? And that makes me wonder, what is an apology?

And what does forgiveness mean? Why do I feel that I need it?

[Speaker 1] (37:17 - 37:24)

Do you feel you did something or failed to do something with regards to her?

[Speaker 3] (37:26 - 37:40)

Without the numerous examples that I feel I have, I feel that I was a very young mother, but looking back, I feel that I parented mostly with my pain body.

[Speaker 1] (37:41 - 37:41)

Yes.

[Speaker 3] (37:42 - 38:15)

And so, I didn't have ever a moment of sort of conscious awakening prior to her death and finding your teachings. And so, looking back, I have a lot of regret, and I have a lot of guilt that I feel that only she can relieve me from that.

[Speaker 1] (38:20 - 50:28)

Well, it's not the primary thing is that for you to relieve yourself by forgiving yourself. Now, what that means we have to look at now, forgiving yourself, what forgiving means, what forgiving another person means or forgiving yourself means. Usually forgiving refers to, is used with reference to certain things that somebody or yourself did or failed to do that you now recognized, that are now recognized as having caused pain or suffering to another human being.

But at the time when it happened, you didn't know what you now know. Because if you knew then what you know now, you would have acted differently. So, you were in the grip of unconscious forces.

You did not have a choice at the time, because without that knowing, which we could call awareness that is there in you now, without that awareness, the element of choice was not there. So, you got taken over by conditioned behavior that you inherited. That was either you inherited through your upbringing and your parents inherited from their parents, or that you inherited genetically, or that you inherited through past lifetimes, whatever it is.

It's conditioned behavior, unconscious behavior, and you now recognize it because there has been an awakening of awareness. Now, the danger that when you are trapped in unconscious behavior, you don't know what you're doing. That's the, as Jesus said on the cross, that they know not what they do.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do. Forgiveness applies when the humans don't know what they do. But it's very easy to look at either what one's own or somebody else's past actions, and make those past actions in one's mind, and even with one's feelings, make those past actions into somebody's identity of who they are.

You can do it to another human being, and you can do it to yourself, rather than recognizing that basically, you were asleep when you acted in those ways. You were not really awake. Another word for it, by the way, is karma, karmic action.

Karma means inherited patterns that you're not conscious of, that operate through you. They have nothing to do with who you are in your essence. They obscure who you are in your essence, and that is not a personal shortcoming of yours, but it applies to humanity as a whole.

It operates in every human being to a greater or lesser degree. The unconsciousness that we all inherit, that moves through us, that is not who we are, that covers up who we are. That is, so we are in the grip of unconscious forces until you actually awaken, and suddenly you see, and then, of course, the mind comes in and says, I did that, or I failed to do that, and therefore, I am guilty, or I am bad, and the mind does not realize that who you are now, you did not do that.

Karmic, you were in the grip of old conditioning, of unconscious karmic forces. This is not who you are. It has nothing to do, really, with who you are, and so the tendency is, this is an egoic thing also, to feel guilty about something that you think I did that in the past, and then an ego, a guilty ego, can become a very heavy ego, and ego is always a false sense of self, so you need to step, forgiving means to recognize that unconscious action is not your identity.

Don't make it into an identity. You have to recognize it for what it is, and not believing that you and it are one, and when you recognize that, that really is forgiveness. You can do, with regards to another person, you can also, and may have to do that, for example, let's say, talk about just one example from my life, my father.

My father was, in many ways, a good person, because I could, I can sense his essence, especially after the awakening, I could sense his essence before it was hard. He was, he came into this world with an enormous amount of anger, or it, when he was a child, he became more and more angry. There are certain reasons why he felt neglected by his family.

He was the seventh child. When they didn't want any more children, it was an accident. The mother was tired of bringing up all these children, couldn't deal with another child anymore.

All his sisters were given much more attention. His dad died when he was 15. My dad was 15, and he got taken out of boarding school because they couldn't afford paying for it anymore, but they did pay for the sister's education, and so he saw all that.

Then he had to go into, become an apprentice in some little store, and his, this is not what I'm supposed to be doing. I'm supposed to be university and studying, and they've, what they did, enormous anger, was building up, and more anger, and more anger, and then he married my mom, and then, of course, this enormous energy field of anger came up almost every other day, and me, as a child, I would, I lived with like an unexploded bomb in the house. There was always a powder keg.

I never knew when it would blow off. Fortunately, the anger was not directed usually to me, but always to my mother, but it was a dreadful thing to live for years with an unexploded bomb, which many times would explode, and the energy of intense anger would fill the house. It was a nightmare.

Now, at that time, I was just suffering, and I do remember having had, I had a dream one night. I dreamt that I had cut my dad into little pieces and put them in a sack and hid it under the bed, and after I'd done that in the dream, the door opened and my dad came home from work, and I gave him a hug, and that dream shows the ambivalence of the child towards him. I hated him, and I loved him, so I then, as awareness came into my life, I realized, and the resentment was there until really I woke up and then suddenly realized the way he behaved.

He had no choice. He was in the grip of this unconsciousness. There was no awareness there that they could separate from the anger and look at it and observe it.

He became it. He was it. No element of choice whatsoever, and when you see that, then you can no longer make this behavior, unconscious behavior, into a person's identity.

You kind of, you look beyond it. You see it for what it is, and seeing unconsciousness for what it is is forgiveness, and so once that has happened, forgiveness really means recognizing that there's nothing to forgive. That's true forgiveness.

When you recognize, as I did with my dad, I couldn't, I can no longer say, I forgave my dad. No, I recognized it for what it was, and suddenly there was nothing to forgive anymore, and the same with you. You recognize something in yourself.

You recognize it for what it was, and suddenly that wasn't me at all, and then that's the greatest thing that you can do for your daughter, whether she's still, she's not here in the body anymore, but that shift in consciousness where you become free of identification with unconsciousness, that is the great, most wonderful thing that you can do for your daughter, because then you find inner peace, and in that peace, there's also love, and in that love and peace, you can connect with her, whether she's still in the body or not. That is the connection, and then she loved you, too, although it might not have been deep down, so you don't need her to forgive you. You need to forgive yourself, and the rest will follow from there, and once you've done that, you will find that she also forgives you if she hasn't done it already, and suddenly the bond, you recognize, she recognizes you, you recognize her in your essence, so forgiveness is seeing it for what it is, what it was, and realizing, oh, I don't really need to.

Forgiveness is as if, in spiritual people, so-called spiritual people, they often say, okay, I need to forgive this person. Real forgiveness is, I'll say it again, is realizing there is nothing to forgive, and then that's forgiveness, and you have to apply that to yourself by seeing it, and you can still see the unconsciousness that was in you, in many humans around you. Maybe you can see it in your parents, you can see it in other people you're close to, you can see it in your partner, whoever, you can see, you can still see it manifests in different ways.

Forgive them, for they know not what they do, and I could add, and it is not who they are.

[Speaker 4] (50:39 - 50:42)

And now, forgiveness is freeing, session two.

[Speaker 2] (51:03 - 51:42)

When I grew up, it was a Methodist teaching, and it was sort of dry, yet there was this prayer, Lord, forgive us our trespasses, and forgive us those who trespass against us, and when you opened the door last time to the Course in Miracles, then I came across that principle of forgiveness, and I had a question on that. What is forgiveness? Is it different from compassion?

Is it different from the Buddhist concept of bodhicitta? I don't know.

[Speaker 1] (51:43 - 1:12:06)

Thank you. Thank you. And again, it comes back to the state of connectedness with being.

It's only from that state of connectedness with the deeper dimension of who you are, from there, it becomes easier to forgive, because forgive means there was something that was done on the level of form, by one life form to you, perhaps another life form, pain was inflicted, or whatever it may be, whatever the transgression is, and it's only from there that you can see the relative nature of what was done, because you are in touch with a space within you that was never hurt by that. That dimension in you is beyond what can be injured. It's only the form that can be injured.

The psychological form, somebody might have insulted you deeply, the psychological form of who you are can feel pain, or the physical form of who you are can feel pain, and somebody inflicted that out of unconsciousness, then recognizing the first step in forgiving is to recognize that this was an act of unconsciousness, and you do not equate what this person did with who that person is, and it's only from the place of connectedness with being that you can say, no longer hold a grievance about that, because you are in touch with that inside you that is beyond what can be injured. If you're not in touch with that space, then you're still, it's hard to forgive. Forgiving means not to harbor grievance, or resentment, or any negative feeling about it, and really that's only possible when you are connected with the formless in yourself.

As Cause and Miracle says, nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God. Nothing real can be threatened, this means what is ultimately real cannot be threatened, but what is ultimately real is not the form, it's that which is deeper than the form.

That cannot be threatened. Nothing real can be threatened, nothing unreal ultimately exists, it just seems to. Herein lies the peace of God means in the knowing of that lies the peace of God, but it needs to be not conceptual knowing, but a knowing on the level of the depth of your being.

And then from there you can look at anything anybody did to you and say it's almost as if it didn't happen. For a while, for example, I harbored grievances against my father for many years because he suffered from enormous amount of bottled up anger, and living with him as a child was like living with a powder keg or an unexploded bomb somewhere in the house, and everybody one knew that at any moment the slightest thing somebody said, and usually it was my mother, the slightest thing somebody said and this bomb would explode and the entire house would be filled with destructive energy. And for a sensitive child, and any child is sensitive, young child, it's a terrible thing to live in constant anguish. Any explosion could be happening at any moment, whenever he's in the house.

So I had the ambivalent feelings of fearing his return home after work and wanting him to come home, divided. And that was expressed once in a dream that I had as a child, and in the dream I had cut my father up into little pieces and put in a plastic or some kind of sack and hid it under the bed. And after I had done that in the dream, my father arrived home and I greeted him and loved him.

And of course all this resulted, even after when I was an adult already, resulted in quite a bit of grievance towards him because my childhood was fearful and unpleasant as a result. And it was only when a transformation happened inside me and there was suddenly that deep inner peace that I realized he did what he did according to the way in which life had conditioned him. When he was a child, he had an enormous amount of resentment against his family because of, and of course the story can go on many generations, he was the seventh child.

His father died when he was 15 and they took him out of the school. They had to pay for boarding school. They took him out of boarding school because they said we can't afford it anymore.

But his sisters were still kept in boarding school. And then he had to do menial jobs. And every day his anger was growing and growing and growing.

He carried it around for the rest of his life. There was not enough consciousness in him to disidentify from the anger. The anger was using him.

It lived in him as an energy field and he could come up any time. He was as much a victim as I was. And I saw that after I had gone through the transformation and found inner peace, I could see that he was a victim of his own circumstances.

There was not enough consciousness in him to see what he was doing. And immediately forgiveness happened. I didn't even have to say I have to try to forgive.

He never did. It was as if he had never done anything to me because basically he hadn't. He wasn't even there.

There was only the unconsciousness in him acting up. As he grew older, some of that anger dissipated. Remnants of it remained.

He also came into touch with some spiritual teachings, especially the power of now, that helped to some extent. And so his ego grew less. It didn't quite disappear, but it grew less.

When I was a child, his ego was gigantic and it was continuously fuelled by anger. An angry ego is the incredible Hulk. So forgiveness happened naturally.

Very often you see that when an injury happens, very often there's a mental judgment of

a situation and actually beyond that mental judgment, not that much happened. Let's take a simple example. You arrange to meet somebody or somebody.

He says, I'm going to help you with your moving. I'm going to help you move house. I'll be there at five o'clock to help you move with my car.

And he doesn't turn up. And that just is as it is. Now your mind then comes in and says, he let me down or he betrayed me or he was whatever the judgment of the mind is.

Very often it is the judgment of the situation that creates the emotion that feels injured. If you can just be with, oh, he said he would come, but he didn't turn up. That's the fact.

Whatever your mind wants to add to it gives you the sense of injury and strengthens the ego. So if you can just be with the pure facts, this is why all that stuff when people about talking about other people, what they failed to do or what they did, what he did to me, he betrayed me. Well, what did he do?

Well, he went off with another woman or man. He betrayed me. Betrayed me is an interpretation.

And the more you have that thought that he betrayed me, the more you feel the emotion that goes with that thought. And you feel, who is it that feels that emotion? The ego itself feels betrayed because who you deeply are, who you are in your essence, doesn't feel betrayed.

The fact is he went off with another woman. That's what he did. Is that all?

Yeah, that's what he did. If you refrain from adding a story to it, then you don't experience the, this may not be, this comes easy when you are connected with who you truly are. Then it is easy to let go of the unnecessary imposition of stories upon events.

The event is neutral. The story interpretation of it is what creates the anguish. And so, if you can just be with what is, but you can see how people cherish talking about what somebody did or failed to do.

And then he did, you can talk about it again and again and feel more and more aggrieved in who they are. Nothing really happened. He didn't turn up.

He didn't return the money that I lent him. I lent him the money, but he hasn't paid it back yet. That's the fact of it.

He is dishonest. Well, you don't need that. He did something to me.

He defrauded me. Mr. Madoff did it. A deeply unconscious person.

I wonder what he's doing now. He's sitting in his prison cell, and many, many people

have not forgiven him. Interesting position to be in, to have aggrieved so many people and created so much anguish and suffering in humans.

But for every single one of them, beyond their financial loss, they have their own lesson to learn. He has his lesson to learn. And life has given you, if you lost money with Mr. Madoff or whoever else, yes, you lost that money, but there is a deeper lesson you can learn in any loss. And one lesson is, of course, don't invest with him again. That's understood. Or anybody else like that.

That's understood. That's easy to know. But beyond that, there's a deeper lesson to learn, and that is any lesson that comes with any kind of loss.

Any kind of loss is a potential opening into the formless, because what you lose is something on the level of form. Whether it's money, or reputation, or some possession, or even an ability to do something, and suddenly you can't do it anymore. Any kind of loss is a loss on the level of form.

So you react to that, and it's painful. But if you can see that the simple isness of that situation, one day you get your investment statement, just to continue with that example, from Mr. Madoff, and everything seems fine. You've added a few thousand dollars to your investment.

Of course, it was all fiction. And the next day, somebody rings you. As somebody wrote in the New York Times yesterday that I read, he got a phone call from his banker relative two years ago, and he said, are you sitting down?

No. Mr. Madoff has been arrested. What?

Lost everything. Potential, like any situation that you encounter in life, there is always hiding something there that is deeper than the actual surface situation. On the surface situation, of course, you take necessary action.

Whatever you need to do on the surface, you do it. But deeper than that, there is, what is the lesson here? And that lesson is acceptance of this moment as it is.

It includes the loss, the disappearance of this form. And there comes the possibility of awakening to the formless. That's the grace that's hiding behind every loss.

It might even happen to Mr. Madoff, because now you are saying he does not deserve to go beyond identification with form. I want him to suffer at least for a few more lifetimes. But nobody can predict what happens.

A person who had everything and suddenly lost everything, nobody wants to talk to him anymore. He is nobody. Everybody despises him.

What do you do? You either commit suicide or you go into total emptiness, because

you're already empty. So forgiving then, forgiving Mr. Madoff, forgiving your father, forgiving your ex-husband, forgiving somebody who did something to you when you were a child, somebody who robbed you, somebody who defrauded you, that's all on the level of form. It has a relative reality, but not absolute reality. You are connected with the formless. You can feel that place where you were never injured by that event.

Even if you lost everything, you can suddenly feel it's actually okay to have lost everything. And you feel that which is the fullness of life itself. So forgiveness is then of what happened.

When you're connected with that level of being, it becomes easy, almost natural. When you're not connected, it's an effort, and it's never really true forgiveness. I'm trying to forgive him.

Another form of forgiveness is really the acceptance of the present moment. So we widen now the range of what forgiveness is, and non-forgiveness of the present moment is what non-acceptance of the present moment is. There's a resentment of what is in the present moment.

So you need to forgive the present as much as you need to forgive the past, which means allow what is to be. Don't argue with it. Allow it, and then that takes you immediately deeper, and then you can take action if that's what's needed.

But first you allow. You forgive this moment. Very often things happen that shouldn't be happening, the mind says, from a traffic jam to some kind of disaster to some kind of drama on a personal level to the tiniest thing to a bigger thing.

And you constantly need to be alert and aware so that you don't become a reactive entity, which means every event that happens determines your state of consciousness. Every person you meet determines your state of consciousness, reactive. You meet an unconscious person who is rude and unpleasant, and immediately you become rude and unpleasant.

In other words, you're at the mercy of circumstances and people. And any unconscious person can draw you to his or her level of consciousness immediately, and you live in reactivity. Non-reactivity, it's really a wider aspect of forgiveness if you forgive situations and people, which is allow them to be as they are because they already are as they are at this moment.

And then power comes that is deeper than form. It's only really then that you can feel your inherent power. And even if somebody took away your power on the level of form, let's say somebody conspired against you where you work and you lost your job as a result of this dishonest intrigues of this person, you lost your job as a result of that.

So on the level of form, you lost something. On the level of the formless, nothing was

lost. There can be no loss there.

So you forgive what that person did. If you don't forgive, you get trapped not only in corrosive, negative, poisonous energy that your mind produces and the emotions reflect in the body. And you live with that.

Some people live with that for years. And that is an unconscious, also an unconscious way for the ego to continue to thrive. Because the more grievances you harbor, the stronger the ego gets.

With forgiveness, the ego shrinks because the ego needs its enemies. It always looks, where can I have my next enemy? So in the absence of enemies, the ego begins to dissolve.

So it's a really, it always comes back, as I said, to be connected with the deeper dimension of who you are. And then forgiveness comes naturally to you, rather than as an effort. No more grievances, because nothing real can be threatened.

And I am in touch with that within myself. That's what happened to me when I forgave my father. I didn't even know I had forgiven my father.

There was no actual act in my mind that says, okay, I'm now going to forgive him. I just discovered one day when he was visiting me, or I was visiting him, I suddenly discovered, oh, I have no negative feelings about him at all. There's nothing there anymore.

Occasionally, he would still get angry, not as much as when I was a child. But even then, it didn't matter anymore. I saw the conditioning that he was acting out.

So I never consciously said I need to forgive him. I just discovered that I had forgiven him.

[Speaker 2] (1:12:09 - 1:12:33)

Now, if I understand you, then it's the repetition of this process that changes, so there's a different flow in one's life, the repetition, and the attitude, if I understand you, that instead of resisting or reacting to be almost grateful for, oh, another opportunity.

[Speaker 1] (1:12:33 - 1:14:28)

Yes, really, every situation that comes is there. There's one reason, which is the surface reason why the situation is there, which is, for example, you invested with the wrong person, and so you lost it, for example. And then the deeper reason is life has given you an opportunity to use that situation to go deeper within yourself, to go to a place where that is more real than the level of form.

Doesn't mean you become inactive, necessarily, but every situation, especially loss and so on, is an opportunity. Be aware also, as I said, of the mind's interpretation of events, because as far as psychological injuries are concerned, what people, that includes, for example, what my father did unconsciously, as far as psychological injuries are concerned, then very often they are based on mental interpretations of what he did. So I was, for years, I kept it alive.

I kept the original emotional life by thinking about what he had done as when I was a young child. If you don't feed it with your thoughts, very often an emotion, a negative emotion gradually subsides. But if you're connected with the depth of who you are, it can sometimes disappear in an instant.

If it doesn't disappear in an instant, the pain body, we know about the pain body, the pain body may disappear suddenly all at once, or it may gradually, as you don't add to it, it will gradually become transformed. The energy that's trapped there becomes freed. It's a wonderful practice.

[Speaker 2] (1:14:29 - 1:14:50)

So it's those thoughts that then, again, they cause this forgetfulness that occurs. So as soon as, if I'm able to be present and then see the thoughts, then knowing that they cause forgetfulness, if I can then go deeper.

[Speaker 1] (1:14:51 - 1:23:16)

Yes, and very often it is a thought that creates the sense of injury that creates the sense, and that then creates the grievance. Unless there's a physical injury, then of course you have a pain or something like that. But if it's, very often you'll find it's the mental interpretation of an event that creates the emotion that we call grievance.

And so, and that again is to do with not being, not having your entire sense of identity in the movement of thinking, but go deeper. To be trapped in thinking, that's the main part of the problem. Because events are as they are.

And then there's a story that's built around it. I gave the example, I believe in Stillness Speaks, of a man who finds himself penniless on a park bench. Okay, well not penniless, but 50 cents left.

And so there's one way the man can say, I'm ruined. Or he can say, oh there, I have 50 cents left in my pocket. The first one is a story.

The second one is a fact. Now usually, and you could give hundreds of examples, it's just a very simple example. Usually, in unconscious humans, the story and the fact are confused.

They get mixed up. Because, and so they believe the way in which they interpret an event or what somebody did, is the reality of that event or what somebody did. Because they are trapped in their thinking only.

And that's the very fundamental unconsciousness, is to confuse fact and interpretation. And so then, whatever opinion you have of another, this person, you tell a story about another person. And very often, what you need to do is, when you listen to another person doing it, or even do it yourself, okay, what's the fact here?

And what's the addition that my mind is adding? What is my mind adding to it? The story that the mind is building up around it.

And then if you, if you suddenly, if you separate the story, then you're left with a bare fact. The bare fact doesn't even require forgiveness. That's just what happened.

But once you add the story to it, you get a sense of self that is part of the story, the me that was done something to me, the artificial mind-created sense of me. And so you have the story, and you confuse it with the reality. And it's an amazing, people do it all the time.

Whenever you listen to people, they cannot tell the difference between a simple fact and their interpretation of the fact. And sometimes the interpretation is totally, totally wrong. They can, it is often possible to interpret a fact in a way that doesn't apply at all.

I know what his real intentions are, and I'll tell you about that. He did that. How do you know you don't know?

You're perhaps just projecting your fears onto the other person. Don't even look for egoic intentions. I believe even the Course in Miracles says that somewhere.

It's pointless to look for what the egoic intentions are. You just end up with stories. Simplify life.

See the fact without adding unnecessary story to it. You have these many, many teachings from different traditions tell you that. I've mentioned a few in A New Earth.

You remember the story, somebody wins, my version of the story, it's an old story. Somebody wins a car in a lottery. Some people say, oh, isn't that great?

So you already have a story. The other one says, oh, it's bad. All the man says is, well, we'll see.

He doesn't add a story to it. The story about the monk who is accused of having fathered a child, you might remember that from A New Earth. There's a monk, the Zen monk lives, and the parents come and say, their teenage daughter says he's the father of my child, and they come and accuse him.

They have a story, and he refuses to manufacture a story, because normally you would say, these people, do you know what they did to me? They wrongly accused me of being the father of the child, and then you can elaborate from there. And the girl is totally evil, of course, because she's inventing all these lies about me.

These girls, she's not evil, she's just immature and fearful. So all these are stories that don't really apply, but the ego would create those stories. The Zen master refuses to create stories out of the situation.

So all he says is, is that so? He doesn't say the girl is evil. He doesn't say the parents are bad, inventing, they're spreading lies about me, whatever, can come up with a huge amount of grievance in the mind.

All that would be in the mind. So the Zen master would have a lot to forgive if he had come up with a story about this girl and the parents who wrongly accused him. Once you have a story, you have the emotions that reflect what the mind is saying.

You feel aggrieved, you're a victim, and then you need to think about forgiveness, but it's difficult. But if you don't create the story in the first place, there's nothing to forgive. And the strange thing is, you embody a different energy that turns every seemingly negative thing into what's ultimately something good, as happened in this teaching story, because the girl, after a year, became a little bit more mature and confessed who the real father was.

The parents then came back and took the baby that they'd given to the Zen master to look after, which he did. Not saying, no, look, they've given me the child. I'm supposed to look after this baby.

Look, how am I supposed? Stories, stories. He can either say yes or no, but he said yes, and he gave the baby fullest attention, never complained, just responding to the present moment, and there was no drama.

So the less drama you create out of events, because this is what we're talking about, transforming events into drama, the less drama you create out of events, the less you have to forgive, because a lot of forgiveness is to do with the stories, the grievance created by the stories that the mind invents. Now, apart from that, there are some real injuries. They may be physical injuries.

People who are very cruel, who do something to injure a person, no doubt these things exist. Children who have cruel parents or whatever, these things exist. In my case, this was not the case.

My father was not a cruel father. He was simply in the grip of his unconscious anger. So even in those cases where there is something real that happened, again, be connected with who you truly are, with the spacious stillness within you, and you see that ultimately

you sense that realm where you were never injured, to feel that in the stillness of who you are.

It all comes back to the same thing, really. One could almost say that every answer, or sometimes the answers are a bit long, but basically at the bottom of every answer there is the fundamental fact of connectedness with being, with who you are.

[Speaker 2] (1:23:17 - 1:23:18)

Thank you. Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (1:23:21 - 1:50:28)

Welcome to our live meditation. Last Sunday, many of you couldn't get on, and that's why we are here again this time, this Sunday. When things go wrong, little things like last Sunday, or bigger things, it's always a good test for your degree of presence.

So it gives you a reflection of how present you are or how non-present you are. When something goes wrong, so you can look back. It might be the case with you, maybe not.

If you look back to last Sunday, was there a reaction of whatever kind against what is? And what is was that Eckhart wasn't there. He didn't make it.

Well, I was here, but didn't reach many of you, so Eckhart didn't make it to our appointed meeting. What was your mind saying? What did you verbally say, comments to people around you?

Or what did your mind comment about it? That's an interesting thing to look at. And accompanying the mental commentary, what was the emotion that went with it?

And some of you, I'm sure, were already so present that there was no sense of upset, disappointment, anger, irritation, some kind of mental complaint. And perhaps some of you just went into meditation, just became present and realized you don't need Eckhart to be present. How wonderful.

But if there was a reaction, then it's very useful retrospectively. Usually, I don't like, as you know, don't like to go to the past, but from time to time, can be helpful to look at a past reaction in which perhaps you lost consciousness, you lost presence, and you don't beat yourself up. No, you just say, oh, that's interesting.

There was the mind talking. And there was an emotion going with it. And I was completely that.

I became that. It took me over. So whenever something goes wrong, big or small, you either react against it in one way or another.

In other words, you are against what is ultimately a dysfunctional state, which in extreme forms becomes insanity, normal insanity, I mean. So the reaction against what is or complete alignment with what is. And there you are.

That means whenever something goes wrong, you either react or you go deeper into presence, deeper into yourself. You can notice that with little things. When little things go wrong, you go a little bit deeper to a place where you don't need the external to be this way or that way, because you already sense the fullness of life at this moment.

You already sense yourself as consciousness, and nothing needs to be added to that. So sometimes it's only when things go wrong, quite often, it's only then for many people who are not yet able to voluntarily enter presence, only then the possibility of going deeper opens up for them, or they become reactive. So another example, you're standing at a street corner meeting somebody for an appointment, and he or she doesn't turn up.

So you stand there, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, 20 minutes. What happens during that time inside you, in your mind, and what is your mind saying about it? And then, of course, the emotions that go usually are a reflection of what the mind is saying about it.

It's an interesting thing to look at. What is it that your mind is commenting? And are you totally identified with what your mind is saying?

Or do you realize, oh, these are just judgments that are coming up? And there's the possibility, the opportunity for letting go of all interpretations at that moment, as you're standing there at the street corner, the person isn't turning up, letting go of all interpretations, and just be there as a field of presence. So to do that, you go deeper within, where whatever happens on the surface of life doesn't determine any longer your state of consciousness, your happiness or unhappiness.

And that's a wonderful sense of freedom, if you can be free of externals. And then at some point, you call the person and say, where are you? Or where were you?

And then there may be a perfectly reasonable explanation why he or she couldn't come, or in which case all your mental commentaries, which were perhaps negative, are revealed as totally invalid, totally inaccurate. It was total misinterpretation. That's possible.

Or it could be that your mental commentaries were justified, and that person says, oh, I completely forgot I was doing something else. What's the reaction then in you? Am I of so little importance to this person that he or she forgot about our appointment?

That's an interesting thought. And that thought can lead to many other thoughts. On a purely practical level, of course, if it happens several times and this person doesn't turn up, then you simply don't arrange to meet with this person anymore.

And can you do this without any negativity around it? That's just what is. A very powerful state to immediately be with what is.

That's what is. Instead of mentally saying it shouldn't be, or strengthen your ego by complaining about it. The same as saying it shouldn't be.

Because the more you can complain about somebody, somebody or something, the more the stronger the inflated ego becomes. Huffing and puffing, I call that. So the more you can huff and puff about people and what they do, or this person and that, the ego feels bigger and bigger.

It's like a balloon. The more you huff and puff, the bigger you get. Can you live without huffing and puffing?

Any complaining about others, what they do, what they fail to do, it's huffing and puffing. If you make a commentary in order to point something out so that something practical can be done about it, it's a different matter. But huffing and puffing is not like that at all.

It has nothing to do with changing the situation. What it changes is the way in which you deal with the situation, which becomes dysfunctional. So you can tell a person's presence by observing another person.

If that person never complains about anybody, that's a good sign. Presence doesn't complain about anybody. It's still relatively rare that you meet people like that.

But perhaps you're already on your way, or perhaps you're already at that state where you have relinquished all that futility of complaining about other people. Enormous step forward. So let's welcome the many ways in which things can go wrong in your life.

Not wrong means, of course, with quotation marks, go wrong. Doesn't go wrong. It's the mental interpretation says it's going wrong.

But we're using that conventional label, things going wrong, to point to something very important. Expectations are not being met. You're not getting what you want.

Something happens that shouldn't be happening. Or something fails to happen that should be happening like last Sunday. As you know, there are always two levels to this.

I'm speaking and pointing out something that is helpful in your daily life. At the same time, there is an underlying presence here. So that's why we call it meditation.

It's not a conventional meditation. But as I speak about becoming aware of a certain type of dysfunction, at the same time, there's a presence there. So it works on two levels here.

And that's also why the pause is important. And there are no words. So that next time

there is a something goes wrong, little or big, there's either already such presence that the reaction doesn't even arise.

Or there's a reaction. And then there is the recognition immediately after, a second after, or a minute after, there's the recognition that there is a reaction. And there's a recognition that the mind is creating its story around the simplicity of what is.

And there's the recognition that you don't need it. You're better off without it. You're more effective in what you do when you're free of that.

So there's a choice of then being present instead of reactive. And then the reaction subsides and presence takes its place, arises, the reaction goes. And then that's an enormous thing when you suddenly realize in the very same situation, a minute ago, you were upset and reactive, and then recognized it.

The recognition comes, of course, from heightened presence. And then you became the presence instead of the reaction. And then the reaction crumbles.

And then in the very same situation, in that minute later, you're free of upset, and you feel empowered. It means externals no longer control you. So as I said, let's be grateful for all those occasions when things go wrong.

There's always an opportunity for going deeper. And if it's something big that goes wrong, something truly huge, something big crumbles in your life, then you'll have to go even deeper. So the depth increases.

When you just let go of a little upset, you go a little bit deeper. But when something big happens, some big loss in your life, then you have to go even deeper. It's always miraculous to suddenly discover that you can be free of externals, as far as your inner state is concerned.

You see that freedom from reactivity in many Zen stories, the freedom from reactivity, that Jesus really, the parable about turning the other cheek is about that. It's not practical advice on what to do if somebody hits you. It's a parable.

Or analogy, or whatever. Because if somebody slaps you, slaps your face, then the most normal thing is to hit back in the same way immediately. So in other words, you're totally controlled by the other person's state of consciousness and actions.

If you go on the internet, where people comment, all kinds, wherever you go on the internet, where people comment about this or that, you can see that a large part of the comments are huffing and puffing, complaining. It's great. The ego loves it.

So what we're really saying then is to live without imposing continuously mental interpretations on what's going on. Presence or awareness, consciousness, more and

more takes the place of thinking. Thinking still has its place for certain things.

It's necessary. And of course, the more presence there is, the better your thinking function works. But a lot of the time, presence or awareness is much more appropriate in any given situation, rather than thinking about it.

So we're shifting from being based in thought to being based in presence. Thought is then transcended. It still happens.

Transcend doesn't mean you do away with it. It still happens when it's needed. It can be a beautiful tool, but you go beyond it.

And really, the main reason why we are here, for example, doing our meditations, sitting together, is to go deeper into presence. Of course, we also find out other things about dealing with the mind, as we've been talking about that today. But more fundamentally, we are here to deepen the presence, so that next time something goes wrong, which is probably quite soon, because little things tend to go wrong all the time.

And I'm using the conventional expression, go wrong. Nothing really goes wrong. Next time something goes wrong, discover your true power, which lies in non-reaction.

You respond if some action is needed. Different matter. You could take action, but reaction is an inner state.

It's not what you do or don't do externally. A fly is trying to land on my nose. Wants to get a little taste of presence.

So just let's say for the coming week, and hopefully beyond that, your spiritual practice is to welcome when things go wrong, and see if you can be free of interpretation. If interpretation happens, you can recognize it and allow presence to arise. So a little bit of presence is required when you miss your bus or your plane.

Much more presence, deeper presence, more intense presence is required when your partner suddenly says, I'm going to leave you. When something leaves you, something, someone, there may be some sadness. Somebody close to you dies, there will be sadness.

But if you're present underneath the sadness, you will feel peace. I have these postings on Facebook. I started to do a couple of months ago, or three months ago.

And the last one, if I remember correctly, was a quote from Leonard Cohen. There's a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.

And really, this is what I've been talking about here today.

[Speaker 5] (1:50:45 - 1:50:46)

Thank you.

[Speaker 4] (1:50:53 - 1:51:01)

And now, forgiveness is freeing. Session three.

[Speaker 1] (1:51:14 - 2:19:29)

Well, as you know, the essence of our retreat is accessing the dimension that is beyond thought. That's the most important thing here, to learn that it is possible, that it is not all that difficult, or the mind may tell you that it's difficult. And so one way of putting it, and that may be helpful to have that perspective for a while, although it's not the ultimate truth, is to say that there's two of you.

It's not the ultimate truth. It's a way of looking that is temporarily helpful. And there's two of you, the person, and the unconditioned, transcendent being.

And that being is inseparable from the being that inhabits all life forms. That is basically, one could say, the soul of the universe. So if you can sense that within yourself, that there's these dimensions, this dimension of, one could say there are many dimensions, but it's all how one looks at things.

All divisions are ultimately only arbitrary, not arbitrary, but temporary. Not the ultimate truth, it's just the truth of oneness. But I'm talking now to the ripple on the surface of the ocean, and that's you.

If you are VIP, you are a wave. But it's basically the same, doesn't make much difference, ripple or wave, or tsunami. So I'm talking to the ripple and saying, that's how it is, basically.

There's two of you. There's you as a ripple, and there's you, the ocean. And that's in your life, so-called your life.

There's no your life. What almost anything one says, the moment you start to speak, you're wrong. So obviously, I sometimes say, your life, that's how one speaks.

There's no such thing as your life, unfortunately, but why not? Because if you say, my life, you've already created a division. There's you and there's your life.

Obviously, you are life. So you can actually learn to sense which dimension is uppermost at any given moment. The unconditioned, which is there when you are present, alert, still.

Or the conditions, the personality, the mind. So when you express an opinion, then already you can know whether you are completely identified with the opinion and then become defensive and angry when somebody has a different opinion. Or if you are

totally, completely identified, you get very emotional when somebody puts forward a different viewpoint or opinion.

So you're totally in the personality, the person. Or you may be able to discuss something that means, that is the art of living in a conscious way, living consciously. I highly recommend this practice whenever there's a discussion about whatever it may be.

In the discussion, the tendency to be drawn into mind identification is huge. And it has, there's a gravitational pull that immediately exerts itself and it draws you into mind completely. But if you are present enough, then you can, you're able to discuss whatever it may be without self-identification.

I mentioned it briefly before, without self-identification with your opinion. So here's the, this is what I think, but that's not what I am. That is a mind formation.

I think it's important that I state that this is, and the reason why I think this is this and this and this. Another important thing is when you have a self-identified, it creates a lot of emotion, egoic emotion. And the emotion actually rises into your mind and makes you confused.

Then you get emotional thinking, which very often is irrational. That's not uncommon. And once you are trapped in that gravitational pull of emotional thinking, you're basically, it always means you're defending yourself in this, that, trying to enhance yourself, diminish the other.

Then once you're in it, it's not easy to get out. You may have to wait until the momentum exhausts itself, as was mentioned in the Seinfeld episode. So then you will compulsively and emotionally talk about something, in many cases, totally insignificant, like the doors on bathroom stalls, as in the episode, and it becomes important to you because your sense of self is in it.

And it can lead to a breakdown in relationship, a different opinion. Somebody has a different opinion, becomes your enemy because he or she has a different opinion. And as you're present, you practice with putting forward your, but so you need to be able to sense this, the deeper dimension still present within yourself, the deep I.

And then the surface I can discuss things. So there's an alertness in the background while you're speaking. That means there's a spaciousness even while you're discussing something.

And you don't confuse the mental position of the other person with who the other person essentially is. That's a continuous practice. Everyday life, almost any situation that arises can become part of your spiritual practice so that whatever you do in your life, any activity, anything you do, if you can realize from now on the rest of your so-called life, there's always something that is of primary importance, although you may easily forget

that for a while.

And I mentioned before, your primary importance is the state of consciousness, your state of consciousness at this moment, not the sub, not whatever it is you're dealing with at this moment. Now it's very seductive. The world will try to tell you and your mind, which is inseparable from the world, will try to tell you that this is of primary importance.

Now it could be that there's an emergency, somebody has fallen into the water and you are going to jump in to save him or her. Hopefully you can swim. There may not be time to sense the unconditioned within yourself.

But what actually often happens in situations when people do courageous things where people afterwards say, oh, you're so, you're a hero. And the person says, well, I just did it. So if there's a real emergency, it often happens that the thinking faculty is totally switched off and you may find yourself taking right action.

And there's no, you may not sense the spaciousness, but it does come the thing in a true emergency, the thinking function stops and you go, you cannot think about what am I going to do? This really is a problem because then you become paralyzed. If a wild animal comes through this door running towards me, let's say it's a bear because they are around here somewhere.

It's a grizzly bear, they are huge. Then it's coming towards me. Is that a problem?

I really have a problem. I wonder what I should do. It's too late.

So in some situations you don't think, thinking stops and then nobody can predict what you will do. You can't predict what you will do. I can only guess that I might run away or I might try and make myself bigger than I am and make threatening sounds.

In the hope that it will think I'm stronger than it. Don't know if that will work. That's what is sometimes recommended when you come across a bear while you're out hiking, make yourself bigger than you are and then you go.

They say either it works with brown bears or black bears, but it doesn't work with grizzlies. The other option is you play dead. That's highly recommended.

And that might be what I would do. And we could all do that. I don't know how I got to the bears, but...

So if it's not an emergency, and most things are not an emergency situation, then the two dimensions, this is something you learn gradually. Many times you will forget. That's fine.

The two dimensions so that there is some spaciousness remains in you while you're dealing with the things of this world. And when you're sitting quietly in your room or out

in nature, then it's not just some, but then the spaciousness, the stillness, the presence emerges a bit more fully and the personality recedes. When you go back into the world and deal with things, you need the personality.

Sometimes people ask me, don't you need the ego to deal with things in this world? Well, you need your form identity, which is the person or the personality to deal with things in this world, because otherwise you are very hard. If you didn't have a form identity, then you would just be the, well, you would become like the God intoxicated people in certain parts of the world where that they are.

I have a deep connection with source probably, but totally unable to deal with the things of this world. So you don't want to go that way because then you go and in the West, they won't think that you are a holy man or woman, they will put you away. So if you have to go there, move to India somewhere first.

But this is not, so you need not your ego. There's a difference between your form identity and your ego. The difference is complete identification with your form identity, which is the body and the psychological form of you.

Complete identification with the form identity is ego. But when you're no longer completely identified with your form identity, you still have a form identity, but it's no longer ego. That's the difference.

So you still, you have a person, a personality with opinions and viewpoints and abilities and certain flaws, some of which as presence becomes more integrated with the personality that takes time, some of those flaws will dissolve, especially serious flaws that cause you and other humans suffering. And there may be a few other idiosyncrasies in your personality that may remain, but most likely they would be things that are not huge things that cause suffering to yourself or others. So there's the difference between form identity and ego.

So it's not, you don't need your ego to function in this world, but you need your form identity to function in this world. But the only way you prevent your form identity from becoming ego is to be present while the form identity operates in this world. And it operates in this world, not only when you are actively doing something, your form identity is also your mind, or actually fundamentally your mind, even when you're just sitting somewhere, then your form identity is probably still operating when you're thinking about something, it's there.

And so a very subtle art then is to be able to think, but not be a hundred percent drawn into this movement of the mind. And this is something that is practice, and perhaps having been here for several days is helpful. So there's a remnant of the other you, the other you, the deeper, the deep I, as I sometimes call it, that's the other, the other half of you.

So this one could say there's the two halves, there's a form, form half, and there is the formless deep half, so to speak, you are both. So you don't want one to take over completely, probably not, but most humans, of course, in this world, for most of them, only one half exists, and that's the surface dimension of them. And that's great pity that they have missed the very purpose of human life.

It's a little bit like a seed that never sprouts, because in a way, every human is a seed, a potential for the flowering of consciousness. But if you look in nature, nature is infinitely abundant. One tree may shed thousands and thousands of seeds, and out of those, maybe one or two grow into another tree, if that.

So while you are acting, or even just thinking, practice having some spaciousness in the background. And another thing that helps is not to get drawn into an uninterrupted stream of thought. This also applies when you're having a conversation with someone.

We all have met people that talk uninterruptedly, one thing leading to another, and it's like having a passage in a book without any punctuation. Such writings actually exist. I personally am not very fond of those writings.

It's called stream of consciousness writing, like James Joyce and others. I could never get into that. By the way, it should not be called stream of consciousness, it should be called stream of unconsciousness.

So you've all met people who, they just, it never ends. There's one subject, and it emerges with another subject, and then they get off in that direction, in that direction, and you sit there, and it's time to leave, but you cannot say, I need to go now, because you're waiting for the gap that never comes. And you don't want to be rude, so...

Okay. But at some point, you may have to be rude. Oh, oh, oh, that may help.

So there's an element of surprise when you suddenly go, oh, I have to go. But this could happen in your own mind, even when you're alone. It could happen that your thoughts go in the same way, and there's no gap.

It just goes on and on. When people worry and have this fear, worry is also a, I mentioned just now, emotion contaminating your thought. The emotion rises into your thinking, and tends to make your thinking irrational and not very intelligent, dysfunctional kind of thinking.

So when fear rises into your mind, fearful thoughts arise, which fuel the emotion of fear even more, and that emotion comes back into your mind, and you get into this vicious circle, and your mind talks and talks, it becomes like that person. That you couldn't get away from, but there you can't even say, I need to get away, because it's, you're there. And you may not even know, you may be so identified that you don't know that there's a possibility.

You have lost, you're lost in your mind. You don't, you're not even there. You're asleep somewhere in the background.

Who you are is actually somewhere asleep, and in the foreground, you're dreaming the dream of unconscious thinking. And there are humans who spend their whole life in that state. Dreadful fate, dreadful.

So there, a very helpful thing, when you are thinking or speaking, let's say just a normal conversation, when you have said something, you come to the end of a statement, and go back for a few seconds into alert stillness. And then either the other person will say something, or you will start another sentence. But there's been a little, a small gap.

Always come to the end of a statement, so that you, so that you prevent a stream of unconscious thinking from taking you over. That's why I gave this little example of Seinfeld, George being taken over by his mind. This happens to humans continuously.

So you don't want to be taken over by your mind, kidnapped, possessed, mind possessed. So the practice is, find little spaces, always spaces, spaces, spaces of awareness, even if it's just three seconds. For example, looking at something.

And you may notice, it's not actually that you have to create awareness, you just have to be alert, and then the awareness is there. Now, if you're very subtle, if you're very, very alert, you may notice something very interesting. And that is, whenever your sensory perception, which is visual, and mainly visual and auditory, but it could also involve other senses, whenever they register something new, so it could be that you're walking out of a door in a building, you open the door, and then a totally different vista is there, just a moment ago you saw a room and a door, now you open a door, you take one step out, and then the first thing you look at, whatever is there, it could be a beautiful mountain landscape like here, or it could be a city street.

But then you may notice, if you're really alert, for two seconds or three, you're not labeling mentally what you're seeing, you're just perceiving it. And there's always a little, very small gap between the act of perception and the mental labeling of your perception. But if you can catch that little gap and become aware of it, because usually people are not aware, they just, they look at something, and then the mind interprets it, and says something about it, usually.

So if you can catch the gap and become conscious of it, you prolong it, it prolongs itself. And then you may be able to take several steps out without any interference of thinking, you're just present. There are also strange things you can do, you may sometimes find that you can know what you have to do next, for example, know what you have to do next, without any verbalization in your mind.

So you can look at a situation, and then the situation requires some kind of action, but

you may develop the ability of looking and then knowing what you have to do without mentally formulating anything that says, oh, no, you should be doing that, I need to do that, what can I do here? Especially if it's problematic, what action can I take here? Then, if you can face a situation in alert stillness, then it's much more likely that your action will be intelligent, and will be just right for that situation.

That's a response. The other is a reaction, which relies on the conditioning of your mind. And so we all know people who, you know exactly how they're going to react when you say a certain thing, if you've lived with somebody, you know when you say this, they're going to react that way, or when that situation arises, they're going to react that way.

This may happen to you too. There's still, if you can isolate certain areas, certain pockets in your life, it's very important, certain pockets in your life where you tend to become unconscious, there may be certain situations, whenever that situation arises, it tends to draw you into unconsciousness. It could even be certain people, whenever you meet that particular person, you act more unconsciously, you get drawn into an old reactive pattern of the ego.

This could be, for example, if you're an adult, you're going back to visit your parents. It could be that, and some people experience it like that, whenever they visit their parents, they're drawn into old reactive patterns, and the parents probably too, and that becomes their relationship, and it doesn't work very well. And therefore, of course, it's highly recommended as a reflection to see how far you've come spiritually to visit your parents.

Famous statement by Ram Dass, if you think you're so enlightened, go and spend a week with your parents. But it doesn't have to be parents, it could be other people, often it's people with whom you share a lot of past, or it could be other people who trigger you, maybe at work, just looking at them triggers you. And if somebody triggers you, means he or she makes you unconscious, you become reactive.

So if you know that in your life, so either people or situations, or it could be, sometimes it happens when money is involved, people become very unconscious. Then let's say you're trying to sell your condo or your house, and then you're talking to the real time, there's difficulties arising, and suddenly the spiritual person who has been to 10 retreats with Eckhart gets very angry and upset with you.

[Speaker 2] (2:19:29 - 2:19:34)

What happened?

[Speaker 1] (2:19:43 - 2:57:03)

It's often people like realtors or lawyers, they often meet people at their most unconscious, so those professions could be potentially extremely enlightening because you really need to be present to deal with all those people you meet in unconscious

states. All the people who go to court, of course, observe yourself, see where are the situations where I tend to lose, become very reactive. And then when you go into those situations, or meet those people, you need to know before, okay, here we go.

And then stay very, very present, turn up the light, the dimmer switch, it's a bit like that. How do you do that? How do you turn up the light, the dimmer switch, feeling intensely the energy field of your inner body helps to anchor you in presence.

So when you go into situations like that, now I'm going to talk to my stockbroker, if you have one, I don't. And you know from past experience that every time you talk to your stockbroker, you become reactive, because you have in your mind, fear is associated with money, and money is associated with the idea of scarcity, and scarcity, perhaps from your childhood, is associated with the idea of survival. And all kinds of things are unconscious thoughts that still live in you.

And so before you do, before you go into that situation, okay, I'm now calling rest. This is my spiritual practice. The primary goal then in that and any situation is to stay present.

But when you go into a situation where you're most likely to become unconscious, then turn up the light of presence just before you go in and while you're in it. And as I just said, it is very helpful to be intensely present within your inner energy field while you're talking. And then you realize there's a spaciousness because that is the doorway, a very good doorway into presence is the inner body is the doorway into presence, can be very helpful doorway into presence.

There's also the doorway into presence, of course, of totally accepting your experience of this moment. So if you can talk to your, whoever it is you're talking to, and just totally accept whatever he or she says in this moment, that's fine too. There are various doorways into presence, but it's presence.

So, or you meet your ex, as they call them, I'm meeting my ex about something. So all the stuff that happened, that accumulated before the divorce happened, all those years, it's back in your mind, and there's your ex and you have a very clear image of who he or she is. And it's not pleasant.

You're very unconscious ex. And then you have to be really, really present so that you don't go into the old reactive mode. And then you're meeting this person.

It's almost without the past. That's an amazing thing. Without your, yes, you know the past, but in the moment of meeting that person, there's only you, there's not you as the personality.

When you become really present, what emerges is that the other half of you emerges more. The personality becomes relatively unimportant. The other half, the unconditioned presence shines through.

And then you're able to meet another human being, even you might have shared a lot of unpleasant pasts with him or her, but you can meet this person when the other, the deep eye shines through you, you meet the person through the deep eye, which means you meet this person without reference to the past. You have that ability if, well, not you as a person, but that ability is in you of meeting a human being, even a human being with whom you share a lot of unpleasant past without reference to the past. So there's, you're meeting that person in the present, fully in the present.

That's an enormous thing. And I have, I know people who have practiced it and many of them have reported back and said that sometimes, not always, and you're not doing it in order to achieve something else through it, it is sufficient unto itself. However, almost miraculous transformations have happened in the other person when you met the other person without reference to the past.

So it's not that you want the other person to change, all that falls away. You're just not bringing the past into this encounter. And then it is not uncommon for the other person also, without them realizing what's happening, becoming freed, at this moment at least, from their heavy personality and something beyond the personality in them also shines through.

And that's a miracle of transformation. That's why sometimes people, when one of the two who share a lot of unpleasant past, one of them becomes conscious, it can lead also to the transformation of the other. Not necessarily.

If it doesn't, it's fine too. At least you are free and you don't need the other to be free too, to be feeling that you are free. And so it can also happen with your parents, that suddenly the way in which your parents relate to you changes when you meet your parents without reference to the past and in absolute absolute presence.

That's an amazing, amazing experience. So I suggest you try it out on, you have quite a bit of time to practice and then Thanksgiving is still a long way in the future. And that's where to try it out when you sit around the big table.

Well, that's for North Americans who celebrate Thanksgiving. You sit around the table and there's the, basically, this is the past, the past sitting around the table. Some people dreading it, Christmas too.

Oh no, because you're facing the living past. So it's a miraculous thing to, and again, one could say that is the real meaning of forgiveness. It's not so much a mental act, mental acrobatics that say, okay, you've done dreadful things, but I'm so spiritual that I forgive you.

I forgive you. At least I'm trying to, at least I'm trying. You're not even trying.

Why do I always have to be the first? It's always the same. You're lost again.

So forgive you is not so much a mental to formulate certain things in your mind and then trying to live up to a certain thought in your mind, which is very difficult, if not impossible. But the real forgiveness is to enter that state of presence so that you're not the personality that's conditioned by the past. And then you can meet the person, even the person who did something to you, if you choose to meet them.

You don't have to meet a person who did bad things to you, but the question is, does that person still exist in you as a mind form, as a thought form, as a mental emotional entity? Does this person who did bad things to you still live in you? They might even have passed away already, but they live in you as a mental emotional entity that you carry.

It's actually like a little gremlin that lives in you and it's not pleasant. And so forgiveness means to recognize that for what it is. It's not really the other person anymore.

The person maybe passed away 10 years ago. It's not the other person anymore. It's something you carry still in your mental emotional field that lives there.

And so that is, again, something to recognize. And if you recognize it as something that lives in your mental emotional field, then it's much easier to step back from it and by no longer getting drawn into it. So that's something to do with something that lives in you and you recognize it as something that you no longer want or need.

And then it gradually dissolves as you're no longer reacting against it. So you have one, you have a split in you, as long as it's there, there's that mental formation, mental emotional entity. And then there's you, there's another pattern in their mind that reacts against it.

It's a bit crazy. But forgiveness then is really meeting the other, if the other is still there and you're actually now meeting them in person without reference to the past. People with whom you have a grievance, people carry grievances.

And they actually like their grievance. The ego loves grievances. 20 years ago, he did that to me.

30 years ago. The ego loves grievances. But as long as you carry even one grievance towards, and grievance is a longstanding resentment.

Resentment could be short-lived, but grievance tends to be a very, very long thing, goes on and on. At least that's how I define it. The grievance goes on and on and you carry it in your mind.

And even just one surviving grievance in you can prevent you from fully accessing presence, from actually fully awakening. It's a very, it's a dark, a dark spot in you that prevents consciousness from arising fully. So you have to be really very careful to see

what they do to you and see that the addiction to a grievance is only the personality derives, the egoic personality, the ego derives sustenance from the grievance and strength from the grievance.

So if you harbor a grievance, that means that the ego itself is still operating. It is not you who is harboring the grievance. It's the ego in you that is harboring the grievance.

So if you have a surviving grievance in you towards another person, you need to know that ultimately it's not you, it's the ego, it's still operating. So you can develop in other areas of your life and the ego remains, can attach itself, let's say you're awakening beautifully, but there's one corner in your mind where the ego survives because it has attached itself to a grievance. And there can be other corners too where the ego can attach itself to particular, anything to do with the past.

It attaches itself to a particular thing in your mind and there it's waiting. And occasionally it can, then even in other situations, the ego can still come back more easily because it's there, it's still feeding on the grievance. So it's not starving, it's still feeding on this grievance that you harbor.

So ultimately forgiveness is to realize that the dimension in you, which is the deeper half, remember you're the two halves, you're the personality, the person, and you have the unconditioned, the deep I. So by being the deeper half, the deep I, nothing ever was done to that deep I. Perhaps something was done for the deep I to be obscured completely, but the deep I in itself is beyond anything that could be done to it.

Nobody can injure it. That is untouchable. It is invulnerable.

It is the foremost dimension in you. Once you can sense that in yourself, forgiveness becomes very easy because not only are you present when you sense that in yourself, but also you are connected with a dimension in which nothing ever happened to you. Nothing ever happened at this deepest dimension.

And then the forgiveness happens almost automatically because nothing ever happened to who you are in the essence of your being. And that's an amazing realization. And it's not something that you arrive at through thinking or through some mental act of forgiveness, as if forgiveness was something that you could do.

You can't really do forgiveness. True forgiveness arises spontaneously from the essence of who you are, and that includes forgiveness of yourself. If in the past, this is a question I'm often asked, people carry a sense of guilt around, and that is very similar to the grievance.

That again is, guilt is like grievance. It is a mental, emotional entity that you carry within you, and you need to know that, that that's what it is. And forgiveness here to yourself for something that you did in the past, and you now recognize as bad, in whatever way,

as immoral as you recognize, because now you're much more conscious than you were when you did that, but you still may carry this deep sense of guilt.

And how do you get rid of that? First, you need to observe that this lives in you as a mental, emotional energy field. And as long as you identify with it, it becomes part of your ego.

The ego is form identity. The ego would prefer to have something great to identify with, but it will readily also identify with something bad, and then you have a conceptual identity of yourself as a person who is bad. I'm a bad person because I did that.

Conceptual sense of self, conceptual reality again arises, and that does not help anybody. It causes you to be stuck in ego and unconsciousness. So again here, guilt dissolves.

Guilt involves forgiveness of yourself. Again, it's not something you can do. It's something that arises when you go deep enough so that you realize the essence of who you are.

And of course, as you know, you realize it beyond conceptualization. The essence of who you are is presence, conscious presence, alert, stillness, awareness, and you can sense the essence of who you are. Then, who you are is no longer, there's no reference anymore to anything in your mind or emotional field that gives you an identity.

You know that this is, this unconscious action happened through you because when this happened, you manifested in this form, basically your evolutionary stage. Nobody can act beyond the evolutionary stage of their consciousness. So you acted out the unconscious state of humanity.

It manifested through you. That happens continuously. And there is ultimately no true I in it.

There is no true identity in it. If you look to that for your identity, you are lost again in egoic identity and you're unconscious again. You recognize, perhaps you take action to do something good.

You might want to talk to that person or not. All this is secondary. You will know what is right to do if there's anything to do.

But the main thing is that you go deep enough and when you're there and know who you are beyond form, then forgiveness arises automatically. You don't have to do it. So that's either with reference to yourself or reference to another person.

So that's extremely important. There are pockets of egoic identity. So you have to be alert so that if they exist in you, non-forgiveness in whatever form, grievance, guilt, all

those things, then you need to be very, very conscious of that and see, find the space where nothing ever happened there.

At this deepest level, nothing was ever done to you. And that's an enormous sense of freedom. But unfortunately, it deprives the ego, unfortunately to the ego, it deprives the ego from one of its favorite identities, and that's victim.

So the ego loves to see yourself as a victim or a victor. But victim is more common. I wonder why.

Well, not so many people can say, now I have triumphed. I am the great one for a little while. And then that dissolves.

But this victim identity is very strong. And it's there when you have a grievance, again, that one element of the grievance towards another person is always that you have become in the past, a victim of that person one way or another. And even one could almost even say that if you have a guilt, and you identify with the guilt, even there, there is an element of victimhood, you become a victim of yourself, of your own past.

A very subtle thing, this victimhood. And the ego loves it. And it's there in a small way, even whenever you complain about something, but there's no possibility of any change at this moment by voicing your complaint.

So you're complaining uselessly, either in your mind or out loud, about a place that you are at. There's something wrong with it. A person, there's something wrong with him or her.

They're not doing what they should be doing. Or they're doing the wrong thing. Or there's something about them that's not right.

Or they failed to do, but should have done that, but did that. All kinds of things. It could be complaining about what you are doing.

You're doing it, but you don't want to be doing it. It's awful to have to do this, but you're doing it. Every day of your life.

It's awful, but I'm enjoying it. Just, I'm stuck in this dreadful job. Contemplate many areas where you complain.

You complain about, you can abstract things. Government, politicians, or you single out a few. That is always an element of victimhood.

It's an element of, very often, moral superiority, because when you're a victim, that automatically makes you, this is an unconscious process behind it, it automatically makes you morally superior to whoever made you into a victim. Or whatever situation you're complaining about, you are pronouncing judgment. Therefore, you are elevating

yourself to judge.

You are judging this situation as wanting, insufficient, not good enough. Therefore, one can even be morally superior to a situation. You can complain about the state of humanity, how dreadful it that is.

If I were to complain about God, of course God doesn't exist, otherwise there wouldn't be all that suffering in this world. I would do it differently. So, very subtle things, but these all things are easy to recognize when you're present, within.

I just mentioned them because these are so common. Well, I said they're easy to recognize. Sometimes they are not even that easy to recognize, and that is why I mentioned it.

So, be alert. Watch. Be alert.

Jesus says somewhere in the Gospels, watch, watch, be alert, watch. I don't think he said be alert, but watch, be watchful. So, as you go back into your normal life situation, in any situation, starts with going away from here, be aware of especially the background dimension of the deep eye.

When you are going into the bus or the car or the plane, as you start thinking again about what you have to do tomorrow or next week, the continuous practice of being aware of the background awareness, aware of awareness. It's a single thing, but it sounds like two things when you talk about it. Be aware of awareness.

Be aware of yourself as the awareness. That is the continuous practice, and sometimes the awareness will be perhaps when you're sitting on a bus traveling to Calgary or something like that. So, you're sitting on a bus and you're contemplating nature, which is better than thinking about what you're going to do tomorrow.

You're contemplating nature, and while you're contemplating nature, you sense this underlying presence. At the same time, you're present. Then the personality is receded.

The deeper eye is perceiving through you. It is you through the form. Then you step, let's say you fly back somewhere.

Then you're at the airport, checking in. If you're lucky, you get your first challenge there to practice with. Small challenge, two-hour delay to your flight.

Oh, okay. That's fine. I don't mind.

I'm spiritual. That's not the right approach, of course. The flight is canceled.

That's a slightly bigger one. Okay. That's what is, undoubtedly.

Whether you argue with it or not, that's what is. The only gain you have when you argue with what is, is the ego grows. It's a gain to the ego, not to you.

If you can stop arguing with the simple isness of the present moment, you're basically spiritual master. Just simple as that. The difference between you and the Zen master who looks like this great stern figure, he's no longer arguing with the isness of this moment.

He doesn't know more than you. You probably know more than most spiritual teachers that ever lived in the sense of data or information or so-called education. Undoubtedly, everybody here knows more than Jesus did in terms of information or data, obviously.

He didn't have reference to, he couldn't Google anything. The Buddha too, information is not more knowledge that makes you into a spiritually advanced or enlightened or awake being. It's something else.

It is non-resistance to the isness of life, which is always now. That's a huge portal into the deep eye. People tell me sometimes, that's so difficult.

That's the wrong way around. The other way makes life so difficult. Continuously arguing with the isness of this moment, that makes life into a huge burden.

It's so difficult to say yes to this moment. It is. It's a habit, a mental habit that's been there for thousands of years.

It may be difficult to break this habit, but once you're there, you realize that's the only easy way to live. The only way that produces a flow to your life is to let go of arguing with the isness of this moment. Also, that's the end of the ego, because it couldn't survive without the food of arguing the isness of what is.

The dysfunctional thinking, a lot of that is to do with arguing with what is, trying to get away from it, arguing with it. To welcome what is, is an amazing spiritual practice. That means no matter what form it takes, and if you cannot welcome it, you can accept it.

This is what is. You almost, we could say you welcome it. You might not necessarily say, let's say your flight is canceled.

You might not necessarily say, great, wonderful. Because that would be, probably you would be doing this because you want to strengthen your spiritual identity again. It's just, that's what is.

The amount of thinking you do, useless thinking immediately diminishes, because when you no longer argue with what is, you think much less. In fact, in order to truly accept the isness of this moment, you have to let go of thinking, at least in that moment, because that's just the isness of it. Okay.

And then the next thing arises. And then it becomes habitual that immediately you're aligned with the isness in your, that's the enlightened state. You may remember the story.

I've told it once or twice before, or more times. The disciple came to the master and said, I'm going away now. I want to leave you for a year because I'm not finding enlightenment with you.

So maybe I'll find it somewhere else. Can you give me some advice on what's my spiritual practice during that year while I seek out other situations and other experiences? The master said, yes, wherever you go, whatever situation you find yourself in, and whatever happens to you, say these words.

Thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever. And that's your spiritual practice.

Okay. So I can do that. And after a year, he came back to the master and said, well, did you do your spiritual practice?

He said, yes, but it didn't work. And then the master said, thanks for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.

And at that moment, the disciple became enlightened. Before, of course, he was just repeating the words. And suddenly, he went where the words pointed to.

That'd be amazing. Whatever happens to you, you have this, not the words anymore, but you have the attitude. Thanks for everything.

Thanks for this. I have no complaint whatsoever. And then have no complaint.

It will transform your life, obviously. And I'm giving you this because as a living presence, because you are like the disciple, hopefully you're not like the disciple, because the disciple didn't get it. He stayed for years with the master and he didn't get it.

But it is a very powerful spiritual practice. And yes, of course, it requires presence. And it's not in the words.

The words are just the signposts to that inner state. And of course, thanks for everything implies gratitude, and it implies appreciation of everything. And so you don't wait until something unpleasant happened, so that then you apply, thanks for everything, I have no complaint whatsoever.

No, the thanks for everything, and the absence of complaint is in every moment. You don't have to wait for a bad thing in order to practice alignment with the present moment. Then it probably wouldn't work.

You appreciate the present moment in all its little manifestations, the many, many things that you habitually overlook, all the beauty around you, the aliveness around you, that you appreciate. And that is part of the thanks for everything, thanks for this. And when you look at the glass, as I'm doing it again, the light shines, there's a glass of water, the light shines in, and it sparkles here and there.

And there's a little bit of a rainbow effect. And it's an amazing aliveness, this glass of water, the glass sparkles and the water in the glass, and it reflects the light. And if only for five seconds I look at this and appreciate it, instead of reducing it just to a utilitarian thing that I use in the service of something else, which would be drinking, it's a very big difference.

I appreciate the otherwise hidden thing in this life, and we are surrounded by them. So you no longer have to repeat in your mind, okay, you may want to occasionally as a signpost, thank you for this glass of water. That's okay.

But the deeper appreciation is beyond words. So let's have a moment of stillness.

[Speaker 4] (2:58:57 - 2:59:37)

This concludes Forgiveness is Freeing with Eckhart Tolle. Thank you for listening. For more information about Eckhart's work and teachings, please visit EckhartTolle.com.

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